

Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks

**Pittman – Robertson
Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration
Project W-38-L-14
(June 1, 2008 – May 31, 2009)**

**Performance Report
For
Hunting Access to Private Lands**

**Prepared by
Jake George
Private Lands Coordinator
Pratt Operations Office
October 2009**

**Mike Hayden
Secretary**

**Keith Sexson
Asst. Secretary**

**Joe D. Kramer
Fisheries and Wildlife Division Director**

Project W-38-L-14

Objective:

Increase hunting access to private lands on at least one million acres annually. It is hoped that providing additional public hunting opportunities and access for hunters will increase hunter recruitment and retention. The functional name of the program is titled "Walk-In Hunting Access" or WIHA. Secondary goals of the program are to better manage wildlife populations at levels consistent with habitat conditions and other limiting factors, and relieve hunting pressure on public lands.

Progress and Accomplishments:

Response from landowners continued to exceed expectations for both fall WIHA and spring turkey WIHA properties.

Approximately 2,435 landowners enrolled 1,045,077 acres on 2,193 contracts in 100 counties in the 2008 fall WIHA program. This is an increase of 17,563 acres from fall 2007, continuing the trend of increasing acreage seen in the previous year. This was the fourth of the last five years that the target of one million acres enrolled in the fall program was attained, with 2006 falling just 5,483 acres short of this mark. Additional acres were offered this year but were not accepted into the program due to poor habitat conditions, limited access and other mitigating situations. Payments to landowners totaled \$1,628,455 or approximately \$1.56 per acre for fall WIHA, a \$0.10 per acre increase over fall 2007.

During the 2009 spring turkey portion of the program approximately 168,401 acres in 68 counties were enrolled in 393 contracts by 416 cooperators. In the previous year 160,156 acres in 64 counties were enrolled in 371 contracts by 399 cooperators. This was an increase of 8,245 acres, which continues the trend of a 9,246 acre increase in spring of 2008, a 14,544 acre increase in spring of 2007 and 10,682 acre increase in spring of 2006. Payments to landowners totaled \$229,466, or approximately \$1.36 per acre, a \$0.22 per acre increase over spring 2008.

The type of habitat cover enrolled continues to diversify as the program expands. Waterfowl feeding areas, rangeland, and riparian areas are becoming available and readily utilized by our constituents. CRP remains the major portion of land enrolled with an estimated 52% of the acreage. Cropland and range/woodland each comprise an estimated 23% of the land enrolled.

Approximately 135,000 atlases were produced for the fall WIHA. Approximately 25,000 atlases were printed for the spring turkey hunting program. Atlases were provided to highlight the benefits of the access programs, to describe the WIHA program to our constituents, and to show the location of the tracts as well as the regulations that apply to these areas. The atlases were printed in color and contained all public hunting areas in the state. The format was changed from a county-by-county layout to a map page layout similar to the DeLorme Gazetteer in 2007. This new format was retained for the

fall of 2008 and spring of 2009 atlases and paper quality was improved to enhance readability. WIHA access dates and state and federal wildlife areas were uniquely identified by varying colors in the map legend on each page. An index in the back, and on each atlas page, was linked to a tract number on the map that listed the major game species likely to be encountered on the tract so that hunters could select the areas they wished to hunt, according to their target species. These same atlases were also made available to constituents over the KDWP website (www.kdwp.state.ks.us) in a downloadable and printable PDF format, and as point data in a text file for GPS unit download. The GIS shapefile of the fall WIHA tracts was made publicly available through the DASC website (www.kansasgis.org), supported by the KU Kansas Geological Survey.

Department personnel posted the properties with WIHA signs to delineate the boundaries and period in which each tract is accessible for hunting. Additional signs were used to designate tracts enrolled in spring turkey WIHA and were posted by department personnel in the spring prior to the opening of the spring turkey season. 'Safety Zone' and 'No Hunting in Standing Crops' signs were posted as needed/requested by cooperators. Personnel also patrolled the WIHA tracts during the season to ensure compliance with the program regulations by sportsmen.

Survey Work: For the 2008-2009 upland game bird season opening weekend, 76 KDWP personnel distributed approximately 800 windshield postcard surveys to hunters accessing the WIHA areas. Of these, 314 surveys were filled out and returned for a return rate of 39.25%. The responding hunters represented 212 Resident groups and 102 Non-Resident groups from 24 states. The average number of hunters per group was 3.8, and the vast majorities were pursuing pheasant, followed by quail. The average number of pheasants harvested per group was 5.2. The average number of WIHA tracts hunted per group was 3.2 and the average number of hours hunted per group was 6.2.

Costs Incurred:

All costs for the coordination, development, contracting, signing, atlas production, and labor to continue the WIHA program are as shown below.

Total Project Costs:

- STATE SHARE -----\$621,343.00
- STATE OVERSPEND ---- \$269,731.73
- FEDERAL SHARE----- \$1,864,029.00

- TOTAL ----- \$2,755,103.73

Discussion of costs:

Salaries: Statewide reclassification of personnel and additional seasonal hires for posting properties resulted in higher costs associated with salaries than was anticipated.

Consumables: A statewide need for additional sign posting materials, coupled with the high price of steel fence posts, lead to overspending on consumables.

Travel: Additional seasonal hires helped to keep travel spending within the budgeted amount.

Contractual: Additional funding was required for atlas printing and distribution due to improved paper quality, higher general printing costs, and elevated shipping charges. Access payment amounts were increased within areas of historically low program participation in an attempt to enroll additional properties.

Indirect: Overspent due to a change in the indirect cost rate after grant submission.
~~insufficient funds being allocated.~~

Overall: In general, higher costs associated with salaries, materials, atlas production, and lease agreements led to a state overspend for this grant period.